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ABSTRACT

University extension first came into practice in America at Queens College in 1816. Throughout the nineteenth century, a number of extension education programs were established in the United States. Originally aimed at providing both information and recreation, extension courses began to be geared toward meeting specific training needs of the people. By the turn of the century, the university extension movement was greatly aided by the extension work of agricultural colleges. By 1965 university extension programs varied greatly from institution to institution, as colleges and universities responded to what they perceived as the problems and needs within their areas of concern. At the same time, institutions began to recognize the need to offer various support services to increase access to their educational programs. Literature appearing in the 1970s usually speaks in terms of continuing education, with special emphasis on professional continuing education and increasing the use of electronic media to increase program audience size. The recent declines in college enrollments have created the need for a reexamination of the purposes and scope of extension education. Extension educators must assess local needs for extension education, increase the relevance of their programs, and improve their public relations efforts. (MN).

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University Education (Continuing Education): Its Past, Present and Future

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University Extension (Continuing Education): Its Past, Present and Future

This article looks at the origins of the concept that the university should meet the educational needs of the people in its "community". The attempts of various universities to provide an education to people who could not attend as full time students are discussed.

The most difficult task for many universities was to understand and accept that the majority of "extension" students were interested in the application of knowledge rather than knowledge for the sake of knowledge. This phenomenon is now being partly balanced by the increasing number of people of all ages who wish to continue or complete their education and earn a degree. With the present increase in interest in loans, some universities are looking at extension as a possible way to prevent reduction in faculty and services as the number of full time students decreases. Universities are investigating ways in which they may make it more feasible for people to be part-time students holding full-time positions; thus eliminating the need for potential students to borrow money for a university education.

University Extension (Continuing Education): Its Past, Present and Future

University extension is defined by Shannon and Schoenfeld (1965) as "an institutional state of mind which views the university not as a place but as an instrument" (p. 2). The term is used to signify university programs and courses that are not normally considered to be part of usual campus programs (National University Extension Association, 1953). A number of synonyms used for university extension are continuing education, extension education, higher adult education, community education, and community services education. Traditionally university extension has tried to establish what the needs and problems of the public were; to try and meet these needs and problems with appropriate courses, programs and seminars; and, to determine convenient places and times to offer the courses, programs and seminars.

It is difficult to establish exactly where or when university extension actually began. Shannon and Schoenfeld (1965) claim that its origins are to be found in the Secondary Society's lectures on mechanics for farm workers that were organized in 1789. Similarly, in 1800, a class in mechanics was started by a Glasgow teacher who eventually moved to London and continued his classes there. In 1850, a Mr. W. Sewell of Exeter College, England suggested bringing the college to the people who required education. The

proposal was not followed up but in 1855 Lord Hervery suggested a series of six lectures be given by "circuit professors". That suggestion was not realized because of the poor transportation system (Hall-Quest, 1926).

It was claimed by Sir Sadler, the secretary to the Oxford Delegacy for University Extension, that a system of local examinations established at Oxford (1857) and Cambridge (1858), England provided the material to offer lectures in different centers under the control of either of these two universities. The next development occured in 1867 and was due to a request by an association of women teachers made to a Professor Stuart at the University of Cambridge. He provided a series of eight lectures to the women in four different locations in England and in the same year he also gave extension lectures to men. He is attributed with starting the use of printed syllabi and examinations for these extension lectures. In 1871, Mr. Stuart requested that the University of Cambridge adopt university extension as a practice. This was done in 1873 and in 1878 Oxford University followed suit. It was from these two universities that university extension spread to all English universities where it still remains as an integral part of them.

The earliest record of university extension in America occured in 1816 at Queens College (Rutgers University) when a teacher offered public lectures (National University Extension Association, 1953). According to Shannon and

Schoenfeld (1965), American university extension originated from non-university sources at the American National Lyceum. The Lyceum began in 1826 and by 1839 there were approximately three thousand lycea throughout America. The American Lyceum was started by Josiah Holbrook "as a lecture system and public forum for the small towns of Massachusetts" (Shannon & Schoenfeld, 1965).

In 1878, the Chautauqua, a lyceum-like movement, began correspondence study for some of its students in the form of printed lectures. It also offered summer programs for teachers. This lead was followed by a number of colleges and universities making their facilities available to interested groups, but they did not offer programs, yet. In 1883, the Chautauqua Institution was given a university charter by New York State. The 1890's saw land-grant agricultural colleges offering short courses during the winter months.

Professor H.B. Adams, of John Hopkins University made a formal presentation in 1887 of the university extension movement in England at a meeting of the American Library Association. The public libraries in Buffalo, Chicago and St. Louis promoted extension work. The librarian of Columbia University, in 1888, and a committee of New York colleges and universities, in 1890, urged the Regents of the University of the State of New York to incorporate university extension into the state system of education. By 1890, the American Society for the Extension of

University Teaching was formed in Philadelphia: The period 1888-1895 saw a number of American universities begin to offer a system of extension lectures on the physical sciences similar to the English system with printed syllabi and examinations. Actually, there was extension work going on in twenty-eight states and territories by 1891.

The first money appropriated for extension education, by New York in 1891, was not to be used for extension lectures but only for the advertisement of them. In 1892, the University of Chicago had a Division of University Extension established as an integral part of the new university. The extension programs of the various colleges and universities were aimed at adults and others to provide both information and recreation. However, the formality of the educational content and method revealed that the extension programs were just the usual university programs being brought to the people. There was no real attempt made to adopt the programs to the mental level of the extension students; the courses were usually too academic for the extension audiences. Because of this there was a sharp drop off in interest by the people and a number of universities between 1891 and 1906.

The establishment of the Extension Division of the University of Wisconsin in 1906 - 07 was so successful that it initiated a renewed interest in university extension. There were thirty universities that had organized extension

divisions as well as twenty-five agricultural colleges that were actively involved in extension programs by the end of 1914. This time the curriculums and programs were being developed to meet the needs of the people. They must have been achieving their stated purpose for the university extension services continued to expand from 1905 to 1925. The universities continued to try and reach the people of the states in which they were located. By 1925, many universities were conducting extension courses by correspondence as well as by providing lectures in various locations away from the main campus.

The university extension movement was greatly aided by the extension work of the agricultural colleges. The United States Congress in 1887 granted federal subsidies to agricultural stations through the Hatch Act. Similarly in 1914, the Smith-Lever Act granted money for agricultural extension services.

The university extension programs reacted quickly to the 1929 economic crash by establishing off-campus classes and correspondence courses for those who could not afford to go to regular classes. Some of the courses offered by the universities reflected the needs and the concerns of the depression era. Also, between 1940 and 1950, the federal war training programs provided large amounts of money for the growth of programs in the physical and engineering sciences as well as in business administration. In the period 1945 - 1952, some two million war veterans

made use of university extension programs with funds provided by the G.I. bills. This increased use of university extension services stimulated new interest by the general public in these programs. With the money provided, by the increased enrollment, the universities were able to improve the facilities and programs which in turn increased the demand for the new and better programs. The National University of Extension Association's report (1953) predicted that university extension programs would continue to grow because of: the American belief that opportunity is open to those willing to work; the increased need for technological knowledge; population shifts to the city; the universities had accumulated great physical and personal resources; the need for university educated leaders; the draft would keep many of the 18-25 year olds in university programs; federal subsidies; and the universities realization that they must meet the needs of the people. The universities have undergone reorganization, because of many of the above stated reasons, in both their regular and their extension programs.

University extensions in 1965 varied greatly from institution to institution as their traditions, circumstances and hopes also varied. The colleges and universities responded to what they viewed as the problems and needs within their areas of concern. Not only did public institutions respond to the need for extension programs as many private colleges and universities presently provide

excellent diversified extension programs. It was the state colleges that concentrated mainly on teacher in-service programs; the land grant colleges provided extension services in agriculture and home economics; and, the municipal universities' extension services were mainly evening college work and other programs for both business and industry (Shannon and Schoenfeld, 1965). In 1965, university extension was generally recognized as an integral and essential part of the prorgram of all American universities. The extension aspect of colleges and universities was intended to use its knowledge and expertise to help in the solution of the surrounding communities' everyday problems and to provide for the inhabitants intellectual enrichment.

Looking forward from 1965, it was recommended that the extension program of colleges and universities must carry out certain supporting functions in order to carry out their primary functions of providing regular university course study to those who wish academic credits but cannot come to the campus; to adapt regular instruction so that it meets the varying needs of both the young and the old; consultation with the representative agencies of the community, and, creating the necessary agencies both inside and outside the university to properly handle consumer needs. The supporting functions of the institutions were considered to be: a need to actively seek out public problems, needs, and hopes to point out the direction that

research on and teaching of extension programs should take; a need for the universities to actively lead the way in the development and promotion of new programs; and, a need to carry out necessary applied-research so that new trends in extension would be based on fact rather than on conjecture.

The literature appearing in the 1970's related to university extension usually speaks in terms of continuing education with an occasional use of the term extension education. Some authors speak of continuing education as an integral part of higher education (Deshler, Farmer, & Sheats, 1975) while others emphasize the community service aspects and obligations of continuing education programs (Bunting, Moon, and Peterson, 1978); Champagne, 1975; East and McKelvey, 1980). Other authors emphasize the "continuing" aspect of extension education. There is a growing need to continue to educate the public as technological advances are made and complicated ecological concerns are brought to the public's attention providing a need for a continued upgrading of knowledge for the public (Deshler, Farmer & Sheats, 1975; Weins, 1977; National Advisory Council on Extention and Continuing Education, 1978). Another version of continuing education emphasizes the need of extension services to provide programs for the continuation of professional education. It is mainly professionals in the fields of education and medicine that are at present usually required to continue to update their knowledge and skills but there is a

possibility that this trend may spread to the professions of law and engineering due to recent rapid advances in those fields (Cannell, 1974; Grabowski, 1977; Rothenburg, 1975).

There is a growing increase in the use of television as a means of reaching more audiences without an undue increase in extension staff that would be required because of the geography of some areas (Chamberlain, 1977; Kelly, 1977, Rothenberg; 1975; Urbanowicz, 1978). The use of electronic media allows for a more efficient use of a university's resources for extension services and at the same time makes it able to reach a wider range of audiences.

The projected decline in enrollment of regular students in American colleges (East & McKelvey, 1980) and the need for a significant survival of continuing education centers in post secondary institutions (Caldwell, 1978) require another look at the purposes and functions of continuing education. The movement for university extension (continuing education) did not originate with the universities but grew out of the voiced desires of the people in the communities serviced by the universities (Hall-Quest, 1926). It might be wise to consider that when the universities were not felt to be meeting the needs of the people there was a great loss of interest in university extension and it suffered a recession in the period 1891 to 1906. It was the University of Wisconsin Extension Division that reawakened interest in

university extension in America by actively seeking out the problems and needs of the people and by attempting to develop programs that met those problems and needs (Schoenfeld, 1977).

People presently concerned with the improvement and expansion of continuing education programs have either conducted needs assessments of the public (New York State Education Dept. 1975) or have suggested that such surveys are needed (National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges, 1974). There is a growing need for extension sections of colleges and universities to once again become more concerned with the practicality of their extension services. The programs need to take into account the interests, educational background and capabilities of the audiences they are intended to service (Association for Continuing Higher Education, 1978, Champagne, 1975; Oliver, 1977). The universities are once again reminded, as they were in 1965 (Shannon and Schoenfeld, 1965), that there is a need for public relations on the part of the university. It is up to the universities to actively seek out the problems and needs of the community; to lead the way in the development of programs to meet the needs of modern society, and, to conduct research to provide reliable data for new programs and changes in old programs (Campbell, 1977; Oliver, 1977).

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